be paid for the 19 other villages situated on the borders of this National Park; and

(c) the plans of Government towards the resettlement of these villages and when it is likely to be fully implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Pench Tiger Reserve (757.85 sq.km) in Madhya Pradesh and in Maharashtra are covered under Project Tiger during 1992-93 and 1998-99 respectively. There is only one village in Pench National Park namely Fulzari and there are 34 villages situated within 10 km periphery of the Pench National Park, Maharashtra. As per Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 enabling provisions has been made for preparation of Tiger Conservation Plan for each tiger reserve by delineating core and buffer areas, incorporating strategies for wildlife conservation in the core and joint-collaborative inclusive management in the buffer areas, for which States have been requested.

(c) The Wildlife institute of India has been mandated to assess the core areas of tiger reserves where village relocation has to be undertaken, in addition to other protected areas of the country within a timeframe. Simultaneously, action has been taken for developing a model involuntary village relocation/rehabilitation package through professional agency. Till this is finalised and approved by the competent authority funding support is being provided to States as per existing norms under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger. States have been requested for proposal for villages to be relocated/rehabilitated from the tiger reserves.

Conservation of wastelands in Rajasthan

2789. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to WWF-lndia, Freshwater and Wastelands Conservation Programme, Rajasthan has identified 1054 wastelands spread over 3,449.64 square kilometres;

(b) if so, the steps taken to conserve them;

(c) whether Keoladeo Bird Sanctuary at Bharatpur, is withering away due to lack of adequate water supply; and

(d) whether following Government neglect, it has already been de-listed from the Ramsar site and is likely to be removed from the UNESCO world heritage site?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) As reported by Space Application Centre (SAC) Ahmedabad in their report in 1998, Rajasthan has 1054 wetlands, spread over 3,449.64 sq kms. These include lakes/ ponds, playas, reservoirs and man-made wetlands.

(b) Taking into consideration deterioration of wetlands, Ministry has operationalized National Wetland Conservation Programme where assistance is given for activities like Survey and demarcation, Catchment area treatment, Protection measures, Fisheries development, Weed control, Wildlife conservation, Pollution abatement, Research on various aspects of Wetlands, Eco-development activities, education and awareness. Sambhar lake is being provided financial assistance for conservation activities. No other proposal has been received so far for financial assistance from Rajasthan under this scheme. In addition, financial assistance is also provided under the Protected Area Scheme of the Ministry.

(c) The State Government of Rajasthan in their report for UNESCO World Heritage Committee, has mentioned that availability of water to the Keoladeo National Park of Bharatpur is an issue of concern due to increasing requirement of water by villagers for agriculture; hence alternate source of water need be explored. The reasons cited for this water shortage include breach in the canal and river system; leakage of water through the damaged sluice gates; transmission losses like seepages, evaporation and percolation; illegal lifting of water from the channels by farmers, etc. The State Government have suggested both long term as well as short term measures to deal with water availability in the Park, including providing financial assistance for digging bore wells, under Protected Area scheme.

(d) There is no proposal for removing Keoladeo National Park from the list of World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. Though this site is under Montreaux Record, it has not been de-listed from Ramsar sites.